

International Journal Research Publication Analysis

Page: 01-22

THE ECONOMIC FACTORS INFLUENCING LAND USE CONFLICTS IN IRINGA MUNICIPALITY, TANZANIA

Ally Hussein*

Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, Department of Community development.

Article Received: 21 April 2026

*Corresponding Author: Ally Hussein

Article Revised: 11 May 2026

Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, Department of Community development.

Published on: 01 June 2026

DOI: <https://doi-doi.org/101555/ijrpa.6790>

ABSTRACT

Rapid urbanization and rising land values in Iringa Municipality, Tanzania, have intensified land use conflicts. This study investigated the economic drivers of these disputes in Mkwawa and Mwangata wards. Employing a mixed-methods cross-sectional design, data were collected from 347 household respondents via structured questionnaires and 37 key informants through purposive interviews, supplemented by document reviews and descriptive statistical analysis. Findings identify escalating land value as a primary driver of conflict, with 73.7% of respondents noting significant price increases over the last five years. These rising costs have triggered social tension (43.4%) and forced migration to urban fringes (42.8%). Furthermore, systemic governance failures are evident, as 59.6% of participants were aware of illegal land transactions and 70.9% identified corruption including double allocation and document manipulation as a major catalyst for disputes. Qualitative data suggests that high prices and opaque valuation procedures disproportionately marginalize low-income groups, pushing them into informal settlements. Unemployment further exacerbates the crisis; 82.4% of respondents agreed that a lack of formal jobs increases survival-based reliance on land, leading to the informal occupation of public spaces and confrontations with authorities. Additionally, competing land uses drive conflict, with 68.8% of respondents aware of disputes linked to development projects and 71.8% reporting that compensation for displacement was inadequate. The study concludes that the convergence of poorly regulated land markets, unemployment and uncoordinated development projects underpinned by corruption and weak planning primary fuels land use conflicts. To mitigate these disputes, the study recommends strengthening land governance transparency, ensuring fair compensation and integrating pro-poor employment strategies into urban planning policies.

KEYWORDS: Land use conflict, Land value, Unemployment, Urbanization, Iringa Municipality.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Land use changes are primary drivers of environmental and economic instability. While these shifts often lead to resource degradation and intensified natural hazards (Izakovičová, 2018), they are fundamentally rooted in economic competition. In Africa, this is exemplified by Ghana's Agogo region, where a 50-year land lease to Fulani herdsman in the 1990s eventually collapsed into violence as cattle populations outstripped the economic capacity of the leased territory.

Economic pressures are further magnified in post-conflict and high-density regions. In Burundi and Rwanda, land scarcity compounded by patriarchal inheritance and the accumulation of land by elites with non-agricultural incomes has been a core driver of civil unrest (Theron, 2009; Deininger & Castagnini, 2006). Similar economic friction exists in Kenya's Kajiado district, where herders and farmers compete for water as a commercial asset (Campbell et al., 2000) and in Uganda, where weak policy frameworks reduce agricultural productivity.

In Tanzania, specifically within Iringa Municipality, land conflicts have shifted toward the urban sphere. These disputes are driven by speculative land grabbing, weak governance and tenure ambiguity (Sebahene, 2025). Like the mining-related displacements in the Philippines (Oki, 2013) or speculative acquisitions in Latin America, Iringa faces a crisis where land is viewed primarily as a speculative financial asset rather than just a natural resource. Consequently, identifying the specific economic drivers in Iringa is essential for resolving these growing tenure insecurities.

2.1 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1.1 The Theory of Land Economics and Competition

Land economics theory, rooted in David Ricardo's differential rent model, treats land as a fixed factor of production where scarcity drives competition and escalating rents among competing uses agriculture, pastoralism, urban development, or investment. In contexts like Iringa Municipality, finite arable land faces rising demand from population growth and urbanization, pushing marginal lands into higher-value conflicts as peri-urban expansion bids up prices and displaces traditional smallholders and herders.

This competition aligns with Malthusian principles, where population pressures outstrip land supply, fragmenting holdings (often below 3 acres in Tanzanian municipalities) and sparking disputes over grazing versus cropping. Neoclassical views posit market prices as equilibrating mechanisms, yet Tanzania's hybrid tenure system mixing customary rights with granted titles under the 1999 Land Act creates market failures: informal claims persist amid weak enforcement, enabling elite capture and speculative grabbing by investors with off-farm capital.

Marxist interpretations further frame these as class struggles, with liberalization since the 1980s concentrating land in fewer hands, exacerbating inequality between impoverished locals and external speculators. In Iringa, this manifests as farmer-pastoralist clashes fueled by economic desperation, where poverty locks communities into overlapping uses without secure Certificates of Customary Right of Occupancy (CCROs), mirroring patterns in Ulanga and broader East Africa. These theories underscore economic drivers like scarcity, speculation and income disparities, revealing a critical gap: few studies quantify their specific impacts on municipal land conflicts, justifying this investigation.

2.1.2 Primary Economic Drivers of Conflict

Economic pressures form the core of land use conflicts in Tanzania, particularly in urbanizing areas like Iringa Municipality, where population growth and scarcity drive competition over finite resources. Rapid in-migration often exceeding 30% in peri-urban wards fragments smallholder plots below viable sizes (typically under 3 acres), pitting crop farmers against pastoralists in zero-sum struggles for grazing and arable land, as seen in nearby Ulanga District where over 37% of disputes linger unresolved due to overlapping claims.

Investor speculation and land grabbing amplify these tensions, with external capital targeting Iringa's strategic location near Ruaha National Park for agribusiness, tourism, or housing, often bypassing compensation under the Village Land Act (No. 4 of 1999). Weak governance enables this: bureaucratic delays and corruption in issuing Certificates of Customary Right of Occupancy (CCROs) trap impoverished households in informal tenure, while elites leverage non-farm incomes for formal titles, displacing locals and eroding productivity.

Poverty cycles compound the issue, as low rural incomes (e.g., heavy reliance on subsistence farming) force risky encroachments, while off-farm opportunities lure youth away, leaving elders vulnerable to grabs. Studies in similar Tanzanian contexts confirm these drivers: Sebahene (2025) links speculative acquisition in Iringa to governance gaps and Deininger & Castagnini (2006) highlight how income disparities in East Africa escalate violence.

Collectively, these factors reduce livelihoods, spur criminality and stall development, underscoring the need for Iringa-specific economic interventions.

2.1.3 The Cost of Conflict

Land use conflicts impose substantial economic burdens on communities and municipalities like Iringa, eroding productivity, inflating transaction costs and perpetuating poverty cycles. Direct losses include crop destruction from livestock trespass (common in farmer-herder disputes), foregone agricultural yields estimated at 20-40% in affected Tanzanian wards and livestock deaths during retaliatory violence, mirroring Ulanga District cases where unresolved clashes halved household incomes for over six months.

Indirect costs compound the damage: legal fees and bureaucratic delays for land adjudication under the Land Act (1999) drain scarce resources, with poor households facing CCRO issuance costs exceeding annual earnings, while corruption inflates dispute resolution timelines 37.6% of Ulanga conflicts exceed six months. Investment flight follows, as speculative grabs deter formal capital, stalling urban development near Ruaha National Park and reducing municipal revenues from tourism and peri-urban expansion.

Broader ripple effects include food insecurity (e.g., reduced market access for smallholders), heightened criminality (as in Ghana's Agogo violence) and stalled GDP growth, with East African studies estimating 1-3% annual losses from tenure insecurity. In Iringa, these costs exacerbate inequality, locking pastoralists and farmers into subsistence while elites consolidate holdings, highlighting the urgent economic rationale for targeted policy reforms.

2.1.4 Policy and Institutional Frameworks

Tanzania's land governance rests on the Land Act No. 5 (1999) and Village Land Act No. 4 (1999), which delineate urban Granted Rights of Occupancy from rural Customary Rights, mandating Certificates of Customary Right of Occupancy (CCROs) for secure tenure yet implementation falters in Iringa Municipality, where bureaucratic delays and high fees exclude smallholders, fostering disputes.

The National Land Policy (1995) promotes participatory planning and conflict resolution via Ward Tribunals and Village Land Councils, but weak capacity, corruption and elite capture undermine enforcement, enabling speculative grabs amid urban pressures. Complementary frameworks like the Urban Planning Act (2007) aim to zone competing uses, yet overlapping claims persist due to poor demarcation between municipal and village lands, as Sebahene (2025) notes in Iringa contexts.

Institutionally, the Ministry of Lands, Housing and Human Settlements Development oversees adjudication, but devolved powers to Iringa Municipal Council suffer from underfunding and political interference, prolonging resolutions and inflating economic costs. These gaps evident in low CCRO uptake (under 20% in peri-urban wards) exacerbate scarcity-driven conflicts, revealing a policy mismatch with economic realities that this study seeks to address through targeted reforms.

3.1 Methodology

3.0 Methodology

The study was conducted in Iringa Municipal Council, Iringa Region, focusing on Mkwawa and Mwangata wards, which together represent both highly urbanized and rapidly growing peri-urban settings within the municipality. Iringa Municipality covers about 369.1 km² and had a population of 202,490 in 2022, up from 151,345 in 2012, reflecting rapid urban growth and increasing pressure on land resources.

A mixed-methods approach was employed, combining quantitative and qualitative techniques to capture the complex socio-economic and environmental dynamics of land use conflicts. A cross-sectional research design was used, with data collected at a single point in time due to time and resource constraints, allowing description of conditions and relationships among key variables.

The target population comprised residents of Mkwawa and Mwangata wards (about 22,500 people in 26 mitaa), including community members and local leaders involved in land-related matters. Using Kothari's (2004) formula for large populations, a sample of 347 household respondents was determined and selected through simple random sampling across the 26 mitaa to ensure broad representation. In addition, 37 key informants were purposively selected, including municipal and ward officials, land and planning officers, religious leaders and community elders, to provide in-depth institutional and local perspectives.

Primary data were collected through structured questionnaires administered to household respondents and semi-structured interviews with key informants, while secondary data were obtained from policy documents, municipal records and other relevant written sources. Quantitative data were coded and analyzed using STATA version 20 to generate descriptive statistics and explore relationships between variables, whereas qualitative data from interviews were subjected to content analysis. Ethical principles such as informed consent, voluntary participation, confidentiality and proper handling of secondary data were observed throughout the research process.

4.1 STUDY RESULTS

4.1 Economic Factors Influencing Land Use Conflicts

4.1.1 Land value in influencing the land use conflict in Iringa Municipal Council

The findings (Table 5) explain that Land value significantly influences land use conflicts in Iringa Municipal, affecting the distribution, access and utilization of land within the community. Changes in land value over time, rising costs, illegal land transactions and corruption have all contributed to disputes and tensions among stakeholders, shaping the dynamics of land use and management in the municipality.

Table 5: Land Value in Influencing the Land Use Conflict in Iringa Municipal (n= 347).

Variables	Frequency	Percent (%)	P-value	chi-Square
Effect of rising land cost affect to community (n= 332)				
Social tension	144	43.4		
Migration	142	42.8		
Unaffordable housing	39	11.7		
Other	7	2.1	0.052	
Total	332	100		
Land value change in Iringa Municipal over the past five years (n= 346)				
Increased significantly	255	73.7		
Increased a bit	70	20.2		
No changes	21	6.1	0.107	
Total	346	100		
Awareness of illegal land buying or selling cases in Iringa Municipal (n= 347)				
Yes	207	59.6		
No	140	40.4		
Total	347	100		
Corruption is a factor in land conflicts in Iringa Municipal (n= 347)				
Yes	246	70.9		
No	101	29.1	0.001	
Total	347	100		

Source: Field Data, 2025

The qualitative findings reveal that rising land values in Iringa Municipal have become a major catalyst for land use conflicts, particularly as demand for plots continues to grow.

One respondent reported that

The increasing cost of land has intensified competition among residents, making access to land more difficult for low-income family and also fluctuations in land value create

opportunities for manipulation by individuals with financial or political power, who often acquire land in areas expected to appreciate.15/8/2025

This situation fosters mistrust and tension, especially when valuation procedures appear inconsistent or poorly communicated to the public.

Another respondent explains that: -

Corruption and illegal land transactions have escalated disputes linked to land value in the municipality. Many indicated that high land prices motivate unethical practices such as double allocation of plots, unauthorized sales and preferential treatment in land administration further straining community relations. (Interviewed 17/8/2025)

The findings also show that marginalized households are disproportionately affected, “as rising values push them to the outskirts or into informal settlements, where they later face accusations of encroachment.”

One informant from local authorities acknowledged these challenges, explaining that:

There was a big misunderstanding about valuation methods used by the government and limited transparency contributes to dissatisfaction and ultimately fuel conflicts. The confusion increase mistrust from all the people expected to get compensations (Interviewed 18/8/2025)

According to the study result by Kombe (2005) reported that in rapidly urbanizing areas of Tanzania, rising land prices encourage speculation, informal transactions and competition over scarce plots, all of which heighten land use conflicts. Similarly, Kironde (2006) observed that as urban land value increases, powerful actors often manipulate planning and allocation systems to their advantage, leading to grievances among poorer households who feel excluded from formal access. These findings closely mirror the situation in Iringa, where participants indicated that valuable land attracts manipulation and disputes.

According to the study by Kinyanjui & Pfortner (2016), studying Kenyan urban settlements, similarly concluded that increasing land prices intensify competition and foster conflicts, especially where governance is weak or where allocation processes lack transparency. Furthermore, Adam (2014) in his study demonstrated that in Ethiopian peri-urban areas, rising land values contributed to disputes between communities and government officials due to inconsistent valuation and unregulated land markets. These studies collectively support the argument that escalating land value combined with limited transparency and corruption deepens land use conflicts, as evidenced in Iringa Municipal.

4.1.1.1 Effect of rising land cost affect to community

The findings (Table 5) show that rising land costs generate widespread socio-economic stress within Iringa Municipality, with 43.4% of respondent's attributes higher land values to increased social tensions and 42.8% linked them to forced migration. This indicates that land is no longer merely a productive and residential resource but has become a competitive economic commodity. As prices escalate, households' especially low-income groups are pushed to peri-urban fringes or forced into informal settlements, heightening spatial inequality.

The 11.7% reported unaffordable housing to emerging urban exclusion dynamics where residents could not secure legally recognized plots and instead relied on informal land markets prone to exploitation and conflict. The findings align with political economy theories of land value: that rising prices, when uncontrolled or poorly regulated, reinforce socio-economic hierarchies, intensify land speculation and generate tension between the market, the state and the community. In Iringa, rising land values produced a volatile combination of displacement pressures, informal land dealings and mistrust toward authority's conditions ripe for conflict escalation.

During key informant's interview respondents complain that: "Only few people in the community business person and employed can afford the market price of the land. Also middle income group of people cannot even construct the house due to life cost to be high (Interviewed 19/8/2025).

The study aligned by study done in Ghana by Gough & Yankson (2011) in that rising land prices force many households into unplanned settlements, creating tensions over land access and contributing to spatial segregation. Mabogunje (2010) emphasizes that the commodification of urban land driven by population growth and speculative demand deepens socio economic hierarchies and triggers contestations between state authorities, residents and investors. These findings strongly support field results showing that increasing land values in Iringa Municipal Council fuel forced migration, social tension and housing exclusion.

4.3.1.2 Land value change in Iringa Municipality

The results (Table 5) disclose that a substantial 73.7% of respondents reported a significant land value increase over the past five years, reflecting Iringa's rapid urban transformation. Such steep land appreciation suggests intensified demand from investors, expanding commercial interests and population inflows that exceed land supply. The shift also indicates

a transition from customary tenure practices toward more monetized land relations. Only 6.1% observed no change, suggesting near-universal recognition of market-driven pressure. Perspectives on urban land markets suggest that such rapid value escalation when coupled with weak regulation tends to produce speculation, encroachment, fraudulent sales and competition for strategic parcels. In the study area, the magnitude of value change implies that land had become an asset for wealth accumulation rather than a basic human necessity and this commodification heightened conflict as residents, developers and the municipality competed for increasingly valuable spaces.

During key informants interview a respondent said that:

In the past five years the number of people in the Iringa municipality was low hence competition for land was not high. Ever since the number of people has increased automatically the price of land has gone high. Universities found in Iringa have been increasing enrollment rate and affect investments in hostels which affect land price. (Interviewed 14/8/2025)

These study findings are similar to those by Kombe & Kreibich (2000) in that rapid value changes in Tanzanian peri-urban areas encourage informal subdivision, fraudulent transactions and displacement of long-term residents unable to compete in the monetized land market. UN-Habitat (2010) similarly noted that fast growing urban regions in Africa experience market driven pressures that often undermine customary tenure, encourage sales without documentation and heighten land conflicts.

4.1.1.3 Awareness of illegal land buying or selling cases in Iringa Municipality

The data (Table 5) indicates that 59.6% of respondents were aware of illegal land transactions, suggesting widespread informal land market activity existed. Illegal sales typically emerge in settings where formal access to land is costly, bureaucratic, or perceived as corrupt practices. Such transactions often involved unregistered brokers, unauthorized allocations, or sales of land with disputed or unclear ownership. Awareness at this scale pointed to systemic governance weaknesses in the land administration system. Informal land markets flourished when residents lost confidence in formal institutions, leading to parallel systems of land access that undermined transparency, fairness and accountability. This aligned with institutional failure theories, which suggest that when official systems fail to provide accessible and trusted services, society shifts toward informal alternatives that are

legally insecure and conflict-prone. The prevalence of illegal selling signals vulnerabilities that perpetuate disputes, double allocations and boundary claims.

One respondent reveals that:

Some of the people in the community who have financial power normally get land illegally by buying or acquire land by force or without following procedure. They may take your land and establish their business projects and when you go to the authority you will realize that they possess legal documents (Interviewed on 15/8/2025).

The study conducted by Ubink and Quan (2008) documented that across many African countries, informal land sales flourish when residents distrust formal allocation processes or find them inaccessible. Kombe (2010) noted that in Dar es Salaam, illegal land markets expanded due to bureaucratic delays and weak enforcement, leading to multiple claims, unplanned settlements and persistent disputes. Similarly, Toulmin (2009) found that the combination of rising land demands and limited regulations created parallel informal markets that bypass formal administrative procedures. Widespread illegal land sales resulted from unclear land records and weak monitoring systems, contributing directly to conflicts. (Kakuru, 2019). These findings validate field results showing widespread awareness of illegal land transactions signalled governance weaknesses and insecurity in the land market.

4.3.1.4 Corruption as a factor in land conflicts in Iringa Municipality

The result (Table 5) indicated that 70.9% of respondents identified corruption as a major factor in land conflicts and with a significant p-value (0.001) it demonstrates a strong and widespread perception of corrupt practices within land administration. Corruption manifested in many forms: bribery for plot allocation, manipulation of land documents, preferential treatment of influential individuals and deliberate issuance of overlapping titles.

The significance of these findings reflects deep governance weaknesses and systemic breaches of accountability.

The results from the one respondent revealed that: -

The entire land department have failed to discourse corruption matters in the department, most of the official they do double allocation of plot; they ask money if you want them to go and show your plots. In the name of transport, the entire process of getting land offer is not clear this because of corruption (Interviewed on 16/8/2025)

In this way when land institutions become compromised, conflicts intensify because decisions cease to be viewed as legitimate or fair. Corruption erodes trust in municipal

authorities, encourages informal land dealings and fuels resentment among residents who feel marginalized by opaque or biased land allocation systems. This perception directly contributes to land disputes, institutional delegitimization and resistance to land use regulations.

Transparency International (2011) identified land administration as one of the most corruption prone sectors in Africa, with bribery, favoritism and manipulation of records being common practices in the context of land are conflicts. Kironde (2000) found that corruption in allocation and titling processes in Tanzania significantly contributed to overlapping claims and tenure insecurity. Thus, emphasized that when land governance institutions lose legitimacy due to corrupt practices, disputes escalate and communities opt for informal mechanisms or extra-legal solutions (Oringher & Feder, 2009)

In a similar vein, Enemark (2012) found that corruption undermines the credibility of land registries, promotes fraudulent transactions and increases boundary conflicts. In addition, corrupt land deals involving officials and political elites were central to recurrent land disputes Klopp (2012) These findings reinforce the field results showing that corruption fuels mistrust, encourages illegal dealings and heightens the likelihood of conflict.

4.3.2 Unemployment in Influencing the Land Use Conflict in Iringa Municipality

The result (Table 6) confirmed that unemployment in Iringa Municipal Council contributes to land use conflicts as the lack of formal employment increases reliance on land for survival. Limited employment opportunities affect people's ability to acquire land, intensifying competition over available land and escalating disputes among residents, particularly in areas experiencing rapid urbanization and population growth.

The respondent in the study revealed that: -

Although land serves as a livelihood instrument of many people to sustain their life, but those who have no employment they cannot manage to acquire the land because it is too expensive in some areas like Mawelewele area land is landed for three months but if you have no employment, you can't afford the land. (Interviewed on 17/8/2025)

Mbonile (2005) observed that high unemployment in urban and peri urban areas force residents to rely heavily on land for both housing and livelihood activities, including farming and informal trade, This often leads to disputes over land access and use.

Thus individuals with limited income and unstable employment frequently occupy public land or unplanned plots, contributing to informal settlements and conflicts with authorities

(Kombe, 2005). In addition, unemployment exacerbates competition for scarce land resources, particularly among low-income households, thereby heightening the likelihood of disputes and tensions Adebayo & Olokesusi (2014). These studies corroborate the findings that unemployment intensifies land use conflicts by increasing dependence on land as a survival resource.

Table 6: Unemployment in influencing the land use conflict in Iringa Municipal Council (n= 347).

Variable	Frequency	Per cent (%)	P-value chi-Square
Employment opportunities affect people's ability to acquire land in Iringa Municipal Council (n=347)			
Yes	187	53.9	0.193
No	160	46.1	
Total	347	100	
Lack of employment increases reliance on land for survival (n=341)			
Strongly agree	134	39.3	0.588
Agree	147	43.1	
No opinion	40	11.7	
Disagree	20	5.9	
Total	341	100	

Source: Field Data, 2025

4.3.2.1 Employment opportunities affect people's ability to acquire land

The result (Table 6) provide a crucial insight that although the findings show a split with 53.9% agreeing and 46.1% disagreeing, the data suggests that employment influences land acquisition for most residents. Those who agree recognize that formal land markets increasingly require stable incomes, documentation and financial capacity to buy land or secure loans for housing. Those who disagree access land through inheritance, informal arrangements, or customary pathways that do not depend on formal income sources. This duality reflect Iringa's hybrid land system, where both commercial land markets and customary systems coexist.

The mixed responses imply socio-economic inequality in the ability to participate in formal land markets and this inequality can cause conflict when those with limited employment opportunities are pushed to occupy land informally, leading to disputes with landowners or authorities. The p-value (0.193) indicates that the variability is not linked to demographic differences but instead reflects structural diversity in land-access pathways.

One respondent argued that:-

The individual who have formal employment like Teachers, Nurses, engineers, Marines Police and other professionals have the ability and capacity to buy and own land compare to those who does not receive salary payment every month (Interviewed on 19/8/2025).

Kanyinga (2014) observed that those lacking formal employment tend to rely on customary arrangements or inheritance for land access, bypassing commercial markets. These dual pathways create structural inequalities in land access and can trigger conflicts when informal users occupy land already allocated in formal systems. In addition Kombe and Kreibich (2006) similarly reported that hybrid land systems, where customary and formal tenure coexist, are prone to disputes precisely because of the socio-economic disparities in the ability to acquire land through formal mechanisms.

4.3.2.2 Lack of employment increases reliance on land for survival

The result revealed that the overwhelming majority 82.4% agree that unemployment increases reliance on land as a survival mechanism, revealing the centrality of land to livelihoods. Without stable formal employment, many residents turn to land for housing, farming, grazing, charcoal production, or informal business activities. This increased dependence often leads individuals to occupy open spaces, public land, or unplanned areas, heightening competition and creating conflict with municipal authorities, private developers, or neighboring residents. Urban informality theory predicts this outcome, emphasizing that land becomes the fallback livelihood resource for those excluded from the formal economy. The tension between survival-driven informal use and state-driven formal planning becomes sharper in contexts of rising urban land scarcity, as seen in Iringa. The result is a predictable pattern of evictions, boundary disputes and confrontation with enforcement agencies.

One respondent reveal that;

Unemployment drives reliance on land and generates tension between informal users and formal land governance, Some individual establish their agriculture activities and business in Government reserved area hence create tension and conflict (Interviewed on 19/8/2025).

Adam (2014) found that unemployed residents often turn to agricultural or informal activities on public or vacant land to sustain livelihoods, leading to encroachment and disputes with authorities. While Sheuya (2010) reported that informal land use by unemployed or underemployed residents contributes to congestion, evictions and conflicts in urban areas.

4.2.3 Competing land uses in influencing the land use conflict in Iringa Municipality

The findings results (Table 6) reveal that under the variable of competing land use in influencing land use conflict, the study considers several key sub-variables, including awareness of developments causing land conflict, displacement due to development projects, adequacy of compensation for displaced persons, use of land in accordance with proper zoning regulations and unregulated or informal developments in neighborhoods. These sub-variables collectively capture the various dimensions through which competing land uses impact land use conflicts in the municipal area.

Respondent noted that:

In many parts of our municipality, different actors want to use the same land for very different purposes some for housing, others for agriculture or commercial activities. Because these competing uses are not well coordinated and planning is weak, conflicts arise when someone allocates land for one purpose while another party expects it for something else (Interviewed on 16/8/2025).

The disputes happen between small scale farmers, newcomers who want plots for building and those pushing for larger scale developments. This competition over land use without clear zoning, transparent allocation, or proper enforcement is fueling many of the land conflicts we face in the community.

Competing land uses were identified by key informants as a major driver of land use conflicts, particularly where residential, commercial and investment interests converge on the same land without clear coordination.

This finding is consistent with recent evidence from Tanzania, where rising demand for diverse land uses and weak planning structures have been shown to intensify disputes among farmers, settlers, investors and local institutions broader studies on land resource conflicts in Tanzania indicate that competition among different livelihood groups such as agriculture, pastoralism, conservation and urban development frequently generates overlapping claims and disputes over land (Alananga, Mwasumbi and Moyo, 2024; Moyo, Alananga and Mtengeti, 2024).

Evidence from peri urban settings in Africa similarly shows that rapid conversion of agricultural land into residential or commercial areas often produces tensions between traditional users and new entrants, particularly where land rights are unclear, weakly enforced, or poorly documented (Ubink, 2008; Alemneh, 2023). These findings collectively highlight that competing land uses, when not guided by effective planning, transparent

allocation and meaningful community participation, play a central role in the land use conflicts..

Table 7: Competing land uses in influencing the land use conflict in Iringa Municipal Council (n= 347).

Variables	Frequency	Per cent (%)	P-value chi-Square
Awareness of developments causing land conflict (n=346)			
Yes	238	68.8	0.001
No	108	31.2	
Total	346	100	
Displacement due to development projects (n=340)			
Yes	240	70.6	0.001
No	100	29.4	
Total	340	100	
Adequacy of Compensation for displaced persons (n=347)			
Yes	98	28.2	0.013
No	249	71.8	
Total	347	100	
Using of Land in accordance to proper zoning regulations (n=345)			
Always	85	24.6	0.056
Sometime	74	21.4	
Rarely	128	37.1	
Never	18	5.2	
Don't know	40	11.6	
Total	345	100	
Unregulated or informal developments in neighborhood (n=346)			
Yes	180	51.9	0.162
No	167	48.1	
Total	347	100	

Source: Field Data, 2025

The findings (Table 7) reveals that a total of 68.8% of respondents were aware of conflicts linked to development projects, demonstrating that development induced displacement and reallocation are prominent drivers of conflict in Iringa. These conflicts typically arise when communities feel uninformed, inadequately consulted, or insufficiently compensated. Development projects such as roads, housing estates and commercial centers often require land acquisition, which if poorly managed creates grievances and resistance. The strong statistical significance ($p = 0.001$) underlines the consistency of these experiences across community groups. Theoretical frameworks on development-induced displacement emphasize that when planning is top down and communication is weak, disputes arise from

perceived injustice and loss of livelihood. The results affirm that Iringa's development processes lack procedural fairness, contributing directly to land conflicts.

Respondent noted that:

Most residents are not fully aware of the developments taking place in their areas and this lack of information contributes to many land conflicts. People only react when construction has already started, because they were never informed about zoning changes, new projects, or approvals given to developers. If the community was engaged early and kept updated, many of these disputes could be prevented (Interviewed on 15/8/2025).

Makupa (2025) noted that community awareness of land acquisition for infrastructure and housing projects often highlighted perceived inequities in consultation and participation. Kironde (2006) observed that top down planning and limited stakeholder engagement exacerbate tensions, as residents feel excluded from decision-making and poorly informed about projects affecting their land. Internationally, Cernea (2000) emphasizes that development-induced displacement becomes a major source of conflict when communities are inadequately consulted, reflecting procedural injustice and loss of livelihood. These studies support research finding that 68.8% of respondents in Iringa were aware of development linked land conflicts, showing a strong connection between perceived exclusion and disputes.

The study (Table 7) indicates a major disruption caused by development projects 70.6% reporting displacement. Displacement was a physical relocation and a socio economic and psychological disturbance that affects identity, livelihood and belonging. Forced relocations often lead to long term grievances when residents believe compensation is unfair or when relocation sites fail to meet their socio-economic needs. This aligns with global research on displacement, which shows that communities subjected to involuntary resettlement frequently engage in conflict, legal disputes, or protest.

In Iringa, high displacement levels reflect both rapid development and insufficient safeguards to protect affected groups. As displacement disrupts social networks and erodes place-based rights, it becomes a flashpoint for conflict.

One of the respondents reveals that:

Those who were displaced due to construction of schools, markets, roads and hospital were not able to stabilize in their normal life because getting house and farms for farming took

time. Others decided to shift to the village where land is a bit cheap (Interviewed on 13/8/2025).

Cernea (2000) indicated that involuntary resettlement disrupts livelihoods and social networks, often provoking resistance, legal challenges and social tension. Klopp (2012) found that large-scale infrastructure projects caused displacement that triggered disputes over land ownership and compensation. Similarly, Paradza *et al*, (2021) found that rapid urban development leads to forced relocation, particularly in informal settlements and that insufficient safeguards exacerbate tensions.

The findings (Table 7) indicate that the majority of respondents (71.8%) believe compensation is inadequate, underscoring a critical weakness in Iringa's land acquisition framework. Compensation disputes frequently arise when valuation processes lack transparency, when payments are delayed, or when compensation fails to reflect market value. Inadequate compensation violates principles of equity and procedural justice, provoking resistance and conflict. The significant p-value (0.013) confirms that dissatisfaction with compensation is not random but systematically linked to broader conflict patterns.

Empirical studies show that undervaluation is a common cause of litigation and unrest in development projects. In Iringa, insufficient compensation delegitimizes municipal actions and fuels grievances that escalate into land-use conflicts.

During interview to key informants, one key informant shared the experience that the amount of money they were given was little compare to the cost of their property they demolished:

When the government planned to construct the tarmac road to Ruaha National Park, they estimated the compensation twice. After we had already removed our trees and parts of our houses, they came again and changed the plan, reducing the agreed amount of money. 14/8/2025

The study revealed that many affected residents perceived the compensation offered during land acquisition processes as inadequate, both in terms of monetary value and its ability to restore their previous living standards.

This aligns with Makupa's (2025) findings in Tanzania, which indicate that the compensable package often excludes critical livelihood components, leaving displaced persons economically vulnerable. Respondents in this study similarly argued that compensation does not reflect the true value of land or structures lost, a concern also reported in Zimbabwe where valuation inconsistencies and unclear definitions of "fair compensation" have been shown to generate dissatisfaction among the displaced Paradza *et al*, (2021).

Furthermore, the study found that monetary payments alone failed to re-establish income sources for displaced households, a pattern consistent with research in Bangladesh demonstrating that financial compensation without livelihood support led to post-displacement impoverishment Atahar (2021). Even in cases where in-kind compensation is provided, respondents noted mismatches between replacement land or housing and their livelihood need (Uwayezu & de Vries, 2020). Thus poorly planned resettlement diminished the effectiveness of in-kind compensation. The limited involvement of affected persons in compensation decision-making further compounded dissatisfaction where weak community participation undermined perceived fairness and sustainability of compensation outcomes (Agegnehu and Mansberger, 2020).

Collectively, these findings suggest that compensation insufficient in amount and inadequate in restoring livelihoods, reinforcing regional and international evidence that effective compensation requires fairness, transparency and livelihood restoration measures rather than monetary replacement alone

The survey results (Table 7) show that zoning regulations are inconsistently followed, with only 24.6% stating they are “always” adhered to and 37.1% indicating they are “rarely” followed. Weak compliance reflects enforcement deficits, political interference, capacity limitations and public unawareness of zoning rules. When zoning broke down, incompatible land uses emerge, such as residential areas adjacent to industrial sites or commercial activities in planned green zones, triggering disputes between residents, developers and planners. Urban planning emphasizes that zoning is central to mitigating conflicts; where enforcement is weak, unregulated land use becomes a driver of disputes. In Iringa, inconsistent zoning undermines orderly development and contributes directly to land conflicts.

One respondent highlighted that:

Using land in accordance with proper zoning regulations was as an important measure for reducing land use conflicts, as clear zoning helps guide where residential, commercial, industrial and public uses should occur, thus minimizing incompatible land uses and unnecessary disputes (Interviewed on 13/9/2025).

These findings align with those by He *et al.* (2024), in that well-designed zoning frameworks help prevent land-use risks and reduce conflict when consistently enforced. Similarly, Bonye (2021) found that compliance with zoning regulations improves where communities are well informed and institutions actively monitor land development, further supporting the need for effective local enforcement.

However, studies such as Lens *et al.* (2022) emphasize that zoning must be transparent and inclusive, as exclusionary or poorly communicated zoning decisions can lead to misunderstanding, inequality and heightened tensions. Proper zoning can significantly contribute to orderly land use and conflict reduction, but only when accompanied by strong institutional capacity, transparent decision-making and community participation

The finding (Table 7) reveals that 51.9% of respondents identified unregulated or informal developments as a key contributor to land use conflicts, indicating a spatial environment shaped by weak development control and rapid informal expansion. These findings are consistent with contemporary research showing that informal developments typically emerge when planning authorities fail to keep pace with rapid population growth or when formal land acquisition processes are costly, bureaucratic, or inaccessible to ordinary residents.

One key informant explained that: unregulated or informal developments have become a major source of land disputes in Iringa because many residents construct without following approved plans or obtaining proper permits.

One respondent stated:

Most of the conflicts we handle arise from people building anywhere without consulting the municipal planning office. Because these structures are not surveyed or planned, boundaries are easily crossed and later it becomes difficult for us to enforce the plans or relocate them. This situation shows that our control is weak compared to how fast people are expanding (*Interviewed on 13/9/2025*).

The result study align with field result was conducted by Kombe and Kreibich (2021) who report the mismatch between regulatory capacity and urbanization rates fuel hence the proliferation of unauthorized settlements that later become hotspots for land disputes. Similarly, Makoba (2023) notes that informal settlements frequently lack formal surveying, infrastructure and recognized land titles conditions that create overlapping claims and boundary conflicts among residents.

Recent studies also highlight that informal expansions undermine municipal authority and complicate the enforcement of land use plans. According to UN-Habitat (2022), informal development patterns weaken institutional legitimacy and create “planning vacuums” where regulators struggle to implement zoning requirements or guide orderly development. Likewise, Chigbu *et al.* (2020) observe that widespread unregulated settlements signal deeper institutional fragility, where insufficient monitoring, limited technical capacity and poor governance create structural conditions that perpetuate land conflicts. In this context, the

presence of informal developments reflects a broader pattern seen in rapidly urbanizing African cities where institutional gaps directly contribute to persistent land disputes and contested spatial claims.

REFERENCES

1. Adam, A. G. (2014). Land tenure in the changing peri-urban areas of Ethiopia: The case of Bahir Dar City. *International Journal of African and Asian Studies*, 3, 1–12.
2. Adebayo, M. A., & Olokesusi, F. (2014). *Unemployment and its implications for urban land use conflicts in Nigeria*. [Unpublished manuscript/Conference Paper].
3. Alananga, S., Mwasumbi, A., & Moyo, J. (2024). Land use competition and coordination in Tanzania: Challenges and prospects. *Journal of Land Administration*.
4. Alemneh, A. (2023). Peri-urban land conversion and community tensions in African settings. *African Urban Studies*.
5. André, C., & Platteau, J. P. (1998). Land relations under extreme pressure: A case study of Rwanda. *Journal of Economic Behavior & Organization*, 34(1), 1–47.
6. Campbell, D. J., Gichohi, H., Mwangi, A., & Chege, L. (2000). Land use conflict in Kajiado District, Kenya. *Land Use Policy*, 17(4), 337–348.
7. Cernea, M. M. (2000). Risks, safeguards and reconstruction: A model for population displacement and resettlement. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 35(41), 3659–3678.
8. Deininger, K., & Castagnini, R. (2006). Incidence and impact of land conflict in Uganda. *Journal of Economic Behavior & Organization*, 60(3), 321–345.
9. Enemark, S. (2012). *Sustainable land administration: Infrastructure to support the global agenda*. Federation of Surveyors (FIG).
10. Gough, K. V., & Yankson, P. W. (2011). A property market in the making: Land sales and land-use change in peri-urban Accra, Ghana. *Land Use Policy*, 28(1), 405–414.
11. Izakovičová, Z. (2018). Changes in land use and their impact on environmental problems. *Ekologia (Bratislava)*, 37(1).
12. Kakuru, W. (2019). *Governance weaknesses and insecurity in the African land market*. [Technical Report].
13. Kanyinga, K. (2014). Redistribution from above: The politics of land reform and squatting in coastal Kenya. *Journal of Contemporary African Studies*, 32(2).
14. Kinyanjui, M. N., & Pfortner, M. (2016). Competition and conflict in Kenyan urban settlements. *Urban Forum*.

15. Kironde, J. M. L. (2000). Understanding land markets in African cities: The case of Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. *Habitat International*, 24(2).
16. Kironde, J. M. L. (2006). The making of a land market in Tanzania: Privatization and institutional change. *Working Paper*.
17. Klopp, J. M. (2012). Deforestation and democratization: Tensions in the last corner of Kenya's forest. *Africa Today*.
18. Kombe, W. J. (2005). Land use dynamics in peri-urban areas and their implications on the environment: The case of Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. *Habitat International*, 29(1), 113–135.
19. Kombe, W. J. (2010). Land conflicts in Dar es Salaam: Who gains and who loses? *Informal Settlements and Finance in Dar es Salaam*.
20. Kombe, W. J., & Kreibich, V. (2000). *Informal land management in Tanzania*. Spring Research Series No. 29.
21. Kombe, W. J., & Kreibich, V. (2006). *Governance of informal settlements in Tanzania*. University Press.
22. Kothari, C. R. (2004). *Research methodology: Methods and techniques* (2nd ed.). New Age International.
23. Mabogunje, A. L. (2010). *Land reform in Nigeria: Progress, problems and prospects*.
24. Makupa, S. (2025). *Infrastructure development and community consultation in urban Tanzania*.
25. Mbonile, M. J. (2005). Migration and intensification of water conflicts in the Pangani Basin, Tanzania. *Habitat International*, 29(1).
26. Moyo, J., Alananga, S., & Mtengeti, A. (2024). Livelihood groups and overlapping land claims in Tanzania. *Tanzania Journal of Development Studies*.
27. Oki, T. (2013). Mining-related disputes and community displacement in the Philippines. *Asian Studies Review*.
28. Sebahene, A. (2025). *Urban land conflicts, governance and tenure arrangements in Iringa Municipality*. [PhD Thesis/Manuscript].
29. Sheuya, S. A. (2010). *Informal land use and urban congestion in African cities*. UN-Habitat.
30. Theron, J. (2009). *Land-related conflicts in post-conflict environments*. African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes (ACCORD).
31. Toulmin, C. (2009). Securing land rights for Africa's mix of users. *Land Use Policy*, 26(1), 10–19.

32. Transparency International. (2011). *Corruption in the land sector*. Working Paper.
33. Ubink, J. M. (2008). Customary land administration and its role in peri-urban Ghana. *In the Shadow of the State*.
34. Ubink, J. M., & Quan, J. (2008). *How to secure land rights in Africa: Putting theory into practice*. IIED.
35. UN-Habitat. (2010). *Urbanization and land markets in Africa*. United Nations Human Settlements Programme.
36. Van Leeuwen, M. (2009). Crisis or continuity? Land and displacement in post-war Burundi. *Land Use Policy*, 27(3).